DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 438 728 FL 026 166

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TITLE	The Nature of an EFL Teacher's Audiotaped and Written Feedback on Student Writing: A Case Study.
PUB DATE	2000-01-00
NOTE	44p.; "This study was funded by the National Science Council of Taiwan (project number: NSC 88-2411-H-029-008)."
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Audiotape Recordings; Case Studies; Chinese; College Students; Comparative Analysis; *English (Second Language); *Error Correction; *Feedback; Foreign Countries; Higher Education; *Instructional Effectiveness; Language Teachers; Second Language Instruction; Second Language Learning; Writing (Composition); Writing Improvement; *Writing Instruction
IDENTIFIERS	*Taiwan

ABSTRACT

Some university English as a foreign language (EFL) composition teachers in Taiwan have experimented with audiotaping their commentary on students' writing to help students revise. However, there has been little research on how effective this is for Chinese students. Therefore, a study was designed to shed light on this issue by comparing audiotaped feedback (ATF) with traditional written feedback (WF) for teaching writing in an (EFL) course. In this study, the researcher focused on the ATF and WF provided by the researcher herself for one of her students in a sophomore composition class at Tunghai University. The feedback provided for this student's fourth and fifth writing assignments was analyzed. The feedback for the former was provided by using a combined method, i.e., both ATF and WF, while the feedback for the latter was provided by using WF only. The research questions included the following: (1) How effective is the combined method as compared with the WF only method in terms of quantity of feedback?; (2) How effective is ATF as compared with WF in terms of the quantity of feedback?; (3) What are the differences in the nature of the feedback provided through the combined method and the WF only method, if any?; and (4) What are the differences in the nature of the feedback provided through ATF and WF, if any? The major findings were as follows: (1) Both the combined method and ATF were much more effective than the WF only method in terms of the quantity of feedback; (2) There did not seem to be much difference between the combined method and the WF only method in the aspects of the writing addressed; (3) When the combined method was adopted, the teacher seemed to save WF mostly for addressing language errors and ATF for addressing both language errors and other problems concerning content, structure, organization, coherence, logic, clarity, tone, and style; (4) ATF encouraged the teacher to discuss the writing problems more thoroughly than WF; and (5) The teacher demonstrated different responding strategies in her ATF and WF, and the former appeared to encourage the student to do her own problem solving better. Findings from this study argued strongly for the use of ATF over WF. A literature review, extensive tables, and 19 references are included. (Author/KFT)

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東海學報 40 卷(1)1999:131-172
中華民國八十八年七月出版

The Nature of an EFL Teacher's Audiotaped and Written Feedback on Student Writing: A Case Study

Su-Yueh Huang*

Abstract

Some university EFL composition teachers in Taiwan have experimented with audiotaping their commentary on students' writing to help students revise. However, there has been very little research on how effective this method is for Chinese students. Therefore, a study was designed to shed light on this issue by comparing audiotaped feedback (ATF) with traditional written feedback (WF). In this study, the researcher focused on the ATF and WF provided by the researcher herself for one of her students in a sophomore composition class at Tunghai University. The feedback provided for this student's fourth and fifth writing assignments was analyzed. The feedback for the former was provided by using a combined method, i.e., both ATF and WF, while the feedback for the latter was provided by using WF only. The research questions were: (1) How effective is the combined method as compared with the WF only method in terms of the quantity of feedback? In addition, how effective is ATF as compared

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with WF in terms of the quantity of feedback? (2) What are the differences in the nature of the feedback provided through the combined method and the WF only method, if any? In addition, what are the differences in the nature of the feedback provided through ATF and WF, if any?

The major findings were as follows: (1) Both the combined method and ATF were much more effective than the WF only method in terms of the quantity of feedback. (2) There did not seem to be much difference between the combined method and the WF only method in the aspects of the writing addressed. (3) When the combined method was adopted, the teacher seemed to save WF mostly for addressing language errors and ATF for addressing both language errors and other problems concerning content, structure, organization, coherence, logic, clarity, tone, and style. (4) ATF encouraged the teacher to discuss writing problems more thoroughly than WF. (5) The teacher demonstrated different responding strategies in her ATF and WF, and the former appeared to encourage the student to do her own problem solving better. Findings from this study argued strongly for the use of ATF over WF.

Key words: Writing instruction, second language writing instruction, teacher feedback, revision.

Introduction

How to respond to students' writing has been an important issue for many composition teachers and researchers. Since teachers often spend a tremendous amount of time reading and responding to students' writing, information about the most effective method of providing feedback is valuable. Some EFL teachers in Taiwan have experimented with audiotaping their comments for students' writing and achieved positive results. However, there has been very little

empirical research on the characteristics of the commentary provided in this way. In order to shed light on the nature of audiotaped feedback (hereafter referred to as ATF), there is a need to compare such feedback with traditional written feedback (hereafter referred to as WF). A study was designed in which the teacher alternated two methods of responding, one using a combined method, i.e., ATF and WF, and the other using WF only. By comparing the feedback produced by these two methods, the researcher wished to examine the differences between ATF and WF.

Therefore the research questions of this study are as follows:

1. How effective is the combined method as compared with the WF only method in terms of the quantity of feedback? In addition, how effective is ATF as compared with WF in terms of the quantity of feedback?
2. What are the differences in the nature of the feedback provided through the combined method and the WF only method, if any? In addition, what are the differences in the nature of the feedback provided through ATF and WF, if any?

Review of the Literature

ATF has been used since the early 1960s. Unfortunately, not very much empirical research has been conducted about it. The existing literature has mainly concerned the L1 context and much of it provided testimonies made by instructors who used this feedback to explain how they used it and why (Klammer, 1973; Hunt, 1975; Hunt, 1989; Moxley, 1989; Hyland, 1990). Only a few studies were based on empirical data.

A few researchers have investigated how effective ATF is in improving students' writing performance. Pearce and Ackley's

four-year study (1995) which involved 470 subjects enrolled in business writing classes reported an experiment involving a combination of ATF and WF. It was found that such a method led to improvement in students' motivation, the quality of feedback, and a 7.9% increase in students' grades, when compared to the grades they received when the teacher used WF. Hurst (1975) also showed that ATF improved students' report writing and that students receiving ATF made better grades than those receiving WF. Logan et al. (1976) found that the quality of written dental exams improved when ATF was given, and that students receiving ATF did better than those receiving WF. Kirschner, van den Brink, and Meester (1991) studied students in a distance learning program at a university in the Netherlands and they also reported that the quality of students' writing significantly increased after ATF was adopted.

Other researchers have looked at the difference in the amount of speech produced by ATF and WF. Pearce and Ackley (1995) found that the method of combining ATF and WF allowed the teachers to produce approximately twice as much feedback as the WF only method. On average, it took 2.6 minutes to tape and 3.1 minutes to write comments per page after having read a paper one time. Clark (1981) used ATF when grading business and technical reports written by college undergraduates. He also found that ATF had the advantage of speed. In addition, Kirschner, van den Brink, and Meester (1991) reported that the amount of feedback produced on tape was significantly greater than that produced on paper: 1.7 times greater, while the amount of time spent on the former was similar to that spent on the latter: 53 minutes per student with ATF and 49 with WF. Cryer and Kaikumba (1987) interviewed givers and receivers of ATF by asking them to compare this method with WF. Givers reported that

the former saved time not only in recording comments but also in advising students to revise later (since students would have understood the comments better and therefore would not ask many questions).

As far as the quality of ATF is concerned, Kirschner, van den Brink, and Meester (1991) claimed that students in a distance learning program who received ATF felt that ATF was complete and clear, while those receiving WF felt that WF was only "adequate." According to Cryer and Kaikumba (1987), givers of ATF felt that ATF provided richer feedback, because the giver's intonation can be varied (thus criticism could be softened and encouragement could be made to sound sincere). Receivers of ATF felt that ATF provided better quality and comments which were less cryptic than WF. Berner et al. (1996) reported that all the teachers and most of the students considered ATF as having many advantages over the traditional WF. For example, the former enjoyed a higher level of detailedness, specificity, and spontaneity, and it also made students more aware of the audience. According to Pearce and Ackley (1995), students reported that they would choose ATF over WF, because they believed that the former would allow them to understand the teacher better. Logan et al. (1976) claimed that students found ATF to be more informative, complete, and obtainable. Carson and McTasney's (1978) undergraduate students said that ATF was more complete and intelligible. Clark (1981) found that ATF had the advantage of inflection and that he was better able to explain major structural problems on tape than in writing for college undergraduates learning to write business and technical reports. ATF also allowed him to make fuller suggestions about how to improve the content of a report and to correct misspellings and explain rules about style, grammar, and

punctuation. Yarbro and Angevine (1982) showed that 87% of the university students in freshman composition classes felt that ATF was more effective than WF. Also 90% of them felt that they understood the teacher's comments better if they were transmitted through tapes. Sommers (1989) also showed that ATF was more detailed, allowing instructors to clarify their ideas more effectively.

Some studies examined how students relate to ATF on the affective level. According to Logan et al. (1976), Carson and McTasney (1978), and Kirschner, van den Brink, and Meester (1991), students found ATF to be more personal than WF. Yarbro and Angevine (1982) also reported that students felt they were getting more personal attention from the instructor and becoming more aware of how much time was spent evaluating each paper by using ATF. Clark's (1981) students in business and technical classes and Moore's (1997a, 1997b) college undergraduates in report writing classes liked ATF more than WF. According to Kirschner, van den Brink, and Meester (1991), students receiving ATF on their essays responded more positively than those receiving WF. They felt the former was more enjoyable. Cryer and Kaikumba's study (1987) showed that receivers of ATF reported feeling more motivated to work on their writing because they could hear the teacher's voice on the tape. They also felt a higher motivation to begin revising right after receiving ATF, because the feedback was more extended and the advice was more detailed. Yarbro and Angevine (1982) showed that 73% of the students increased their motivation to revise with ATF. In general, the students felt that listening to tapes was more enjoyable than reading WF. In addition, as reported by the two instructors involved in this study, the students responded well to ATF and had shown increased interest in the class. The students also claimed that ATF gave a sense

of security because it could be replayed as many times as necessary and it also gave a feeling of relationship with the instructor. Coleman (1972) also found out that 9th graders in English classes who received ATF regarded composition writing more favorably than did students who received WF.

Another advantage has also been reported. Sommers (1989) claimed that ATF provided instructors with a means of conducting individualized instruction and by using such a method the instructors were able to serve as role models for students to emulate in peer response sessions.

However, some research has reported findings which were not as positive as those mentioned above. Kirschner, van den Brink, and Meester (1991) and Yarbro and Angevine (1982) found that there was no difference in the writing performance of students who received ATF and those who received WF. Kirschner, van den Brink, and Meester (1991) showed that the amount of time spent in supplying these two types of feedback differed minimally (ATF=53 minutes per student, WF=49 minutes), with the main difference lying in the amount of time spent in preparation. According to Yarbro and Angevine (1982), instructors actually felt that it took more time to provide ATF. In addition, Clark (1981) found that it took time to learn to tape comments effectively. According to him, the benefit of ATF was not as great as some researchers have claimed because it was still necessary for the teacher to mark stylistic, grammatical, and spelling mistakes by hand on the written reports. Cryer and Kaikumba (1987) reported another disadvantage: givers of ATF felt that the lack of a written record for later reference was a drawback and that sometimes it might be difficult for students to skip part of the commentary and listen to the parts they would like to hear.

In the L2 context, so far, there has been little research on ATF. In Taiwan, even though a small number of teachers at Tunghai University have been using this mode of feedback with success, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, there have not been any studies on it. Little is presently known about how effective ATF is for L2 learners. Therefore, there is a need to research this topic.

Methods

This study is part of a larger study conducted by the researcher during the 1998 academic year which examined the effectiveness of teacher feedback on EFL students' writing. In this current study, the researcher intends to focus on the nature of the ATF provided by the researcher herself for one of her students, Mary, by comparing it with the WF she provided for the same student. (The revisions made by Mary in response to the researcher's feedback were examined in another paper.) Mary was enrolled in the researcher's composition class, which was offered to sophomores in the Department of Foreign Languages and Literature at Tunghai University.

Participants

The researcher/teacher examined in this study has had four years of experience in teaching university-level EFL writing. She started using ATF at Tunghai University in the 1996 academic year and has found it to be very effective. For this study, the researcher chose Mary as the subject because the feedback provided for her was typical of what the researcher usually provides for her students.

Instructional Procedures

The students in the researcher's class were required to write four

essays in the first semester, and three in the second. The types of writing undertaken were mostly expositions. The researcher adopted the process approach to teaching writing and often asked students to collaborate with one another during the prewriting and revising stages, by having them conduct small-group or whole-class prewriting discussions and small-group peer response sessions. She also provided feedback on students' writing to give additional help with the students' revision in the form of WF, ATF, and occasional individual conferences. In order to study the effectiveness of the ATF method, she alternated her responding methods by using ATF in essays 3, 4, and 6 and WF in essays 1, 2, 5, and 7. However, even though she mainly used ATF when responding to the former sets of essays, she also used WF to a certain extent for writing problems which could be more easily dealt with by using such a method. Most of these writing problems concerned language errors. In other words, she sometimes added, deleted, or substituted a few words on paper to address these language problems. Therefore, it can be said that when responding to essays 3, 4, and 6, the teacher actually used a combined method, which is indicated as CM in the following. When responding to the other essays, the teacher used WF only, and it was indicated as WFO.

The following procedures were followed when using the CM method:

1. The researcher had a cassette tape for each student. She recorded her comments on the tapes and gave them to students to listen to at home. After the students finished listening to the tapes, they returned them to the teacher.
2. Before the teacher began to record comments for a student on a tape, she read the essay from the beginning to the end once, to

give herself an idea of the overall content and structure of the essay, so that she would not misunderstand the student's purpose or plan for writing. This step was important because it would take a lot of work to go back to the section of the tape where a wrong comment was recorded and record a revised comment. As she went through the essay, she marked the sections she wanted to comment on by numbering them consecutively. Before she commented on a writing issue, she mentioned the number assigned to that issue in order to help the student locate it on the paper. Then she started to record her comments on the tape.

3. When ATF was chosen as the main format for responding, the teacher still used some WF. She wrote comments on paper mostly when the writing problems concerned language correctness (e.g., style, grammar, vocabulary, word usage, spelling, and punctuation). In terms of quantity, these corrections consisted of a relatively small portion of the total feedback provided.
4. As a general principle for responding to writing, the teacher always included positive comments among her comments on students' writing, in order to encourage the students to make efforts in writing. In addition, she avoided focusing too much on micro-level issues, e.g., issues concerning word usage, vocabulary, grammar, or punctuation. She believes that when responding to first drafts, it is particularly important to pay a great deal of attention to macro-level issues, e.g., issues concerning content (e.g., development of ideas, originality of ideas, soundness of argument), overall structure of the essay, organization of ideas within each paragraph, paragraphing, tone, style, etc. She always encouraged her students to save most of

the editing work for the final draft. She believes that when responding to early drafts, a focus on language errors should be avoided, because it would direct students' attention to language and therefore cause them to neglect macro-level problems.

5. A handheld cassette recorder was used to record comments since it was light and the researcher could hold it very close to her mouth, so that her voice could cover up background noises very easily. The light weight also allowed her to walk around, when necessary, while recording comments.

Data Collection Procedures

Only the feedback the researcher provided for Mary on her fourth writing assignment, a definition essay, and her fifth assignment, a cause-and-effect essay, were analyzed in this study. The feedback for essay 4 was provided by using the CM method, i.e., both ATF and WF, while the feedback for essay 5 was provided by using the WFO method. The ATF was transcribed and analyzed together with the WF. The researcher kept a record of the amount of time she spent on the initial reading of each essay. When the CM method was used, this initial reading activity included reading the essay once, numbering the writing issues she wanted to address on tape, and writing some comments on paper. When the WFO method was used, this activity included only a quick reading of the draft. The teacher also recorded how much time she spent on the recording of her comments on tape (when using ATF) and on paper (when using WFO).

Analysis of the data was conducted under the assumption that the researcher's proficiency levels as exhibited in her ATF and WF were equivalent and therefore not a confounding variable. A native speaker who has a Ph.D. in an area related to language teaching was asked to

examine the two types of feedback provided for Mary and believed that the researcher was equally proficient in her ATF and WF and that Mary should be able to understand both very well.

Results and Discussion

Time Required for ATF and WF and the Quantity of Feedback Produced

Table 1 shows the amount of time taken to provide feedback through the CM and WFO methods, as well as the quantity of feedback produced by each method. When using the CM method, before taping her responses, the teacher performed two tasks: (1) she read the draft once and at the same time marked the places she wanted to comment on as she read, and (2) she provided responses to problems that could be easily dealt with by writing on the draft (most of these responses were language corrections). When using the WFO method, the teacher first read the draft once very quickly, and then proceeded to write comments.

Table 1:Amount of Time Required to Provide Feedback Through the CM and WFO Methods and the Quantity of Feedback Provided

	Essay 4 (CM)	Essay 5 (WFO)
Initial reading+marking on paper+WF	14 minutes	NA
Initial reading	NA	2 minutes
Recording comments on tape	10 minutes	NA
Recording comments on paper	NA	21 minutes
Total amount of time required	24 minutes	23 minutes
Total amount of feedback produced	1330 words (ATF=1168, WF=81)	210 words

The CM method apparently was more efficient than WFO, since the former produced 55.4 words per minute and the latter produced only 9.1, indicating that the former produced 6.1 times more feedback in total. Apparently, as far as quantity is concerned, the CM method was more effective. This finding supported Pearce and Ackley's (1995) study, which found that the CM method allowed the teachers to produce approximately twice as much feedback as the WFO method. On average, it took 2.6 minutes to tape and 3.1 minutes to write comments per page after having read a paper one time.

In addition, an analysis of the amount of feedback produced by the CM method showed that the major portion of the feedback, i.e., 1168 words, was produced in 10 minutes by using ATF, which means 125.2 words per minute. On the other hand, when WF was used for essay 5, only 10 words were produced per minute. This means the actual production of ATF was 12.5 times faster than that of WF. When both the time for the initial reading and preparation and the time for responding are considered together, ATF was apparently much more effective than WF in terms of quantity. This finding confirmed results from studies by Clark (1981), Cryer and Kaikumba (1987), and Kirschner, van den Brink, and Meester (1991). Kirschner, van den Brink, and Meester (1991) reported that the amount of feedback produced on tape was 1.7 times greater than that produced on paper, even though the time spent did not differ much: 53 minutes per student with ATF and 49 minutes with WF.

Nature of Feedback Produced by ATF and WF

In order to examine the quality of the feedback produced through ATF and WF, the feedback was quantified according to the number of writing problems addressed. A writing problem is defined as an

element in a piece of writing which has a negative impact on the quality of the writing. It can be any problem with content, structure or organization of the essay, coherence, logic, clarity, style, tone, word usage, grammar, spelling, or punctuation. For example, a writing problem can center around a macro-level issue, such as the appropriateness of a writing topic or the overall structure or organization of an essay, or a micro-level issue such as the misuse of a word or a grammar point.

In order to see if the teacher's ATF and WF were different qualitatively, the writing problems addressed were divided into the following six categories, according to which aspect of the writing was involved:

1. **Responses to content**. These responses concern the ideas expressed in the writing and usually evaluate the validity, development, and focus of these ideas.
2. **Responses to structure and organization.** These responses discuss structure (e.g., what the basic elements of an essay should be, the appropriate lengths of these elements, what an introduction consists of) and organization (e.g., where certain ideas should be placed).
3. **Responses to coherence and logic.** These responses concern whether the ideas expressed are logical or consistent with other segments of the text.
4. **Responses to clarity.** These responses deal with whether the ideas expressed are understandable.
5. **Responses to style and tone.** These responses concern the adoption of certain rhetorical devices (e.g., anecdotes) or manners of expression (e.g., tone, voice, linguistic manipulation) to achieve certain effects.

6. **Responses to errors in linguistic form.** These responses concern grammar, word usage, vocabulary, spelling, or punctuation. Quite often they are in the form of corrections.

Table 2 shows the number of writing problems which fell into each of the above six categories when either the CM or WFO method was used. The responses provided when the CM method was used were further divided into responses made through ATF and responses made through WF.

Table 2: Various Types of Feedback Provided by Using ATF and WF

	Essay 4		Essay 5	
	ATF	WF	CM	WFO
Non-language-error problems				
Content	2 (11%)	1 (2%)	3 (4%)	5 (9%)
Structure+organization	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	0 (0%)
Coherence+logic	1 (6%)	0 (0%)	1 (1%)	1 (2%)
Clarity	3 (17%)	2 (4%)	5 (7%)	4 (7%)
Style+tone	1 (6%)	3 (6%)	4 (6%)	1 (2%)
Language-errors problems	10 (56%)	48 (89%)	58 (81%)	46 (81%)
Total of writing problems	18(102%)	54(101%)	72(100%)	57(101%)

Note. The numbers shown above are numbers of writing problems classified according to the aspects of writing the teacher addressed.

An analysis of the table suggested the following:

1. It was likely that the CM method had allowed the teacher to address more writing problems than WFO: 72 vs. 57. That is, the former addressed 1.3 times more problems than the latter. If the

teacher had used the same amount of time in responding to essays 4 and 5, the above statistic should be translated into 1.2 times (after weighting is performed to make the two modes of response comparable). Since the CM method produced 6.1 times more words than the WFO method, the former apparently allowed the teacher not only to look at more aspects of the writing but also to discuss them in greater detail.

2. As far as the aspects of the writing addressed were concerned, there did not seem to be much difference between the CM and WFO methods.

   In both modes of feedback, as far as the number of writing problems addressed are concerned, the majority of the problems concerned language errors. However, in terms of the number of words produced, the teacher still devoted more feedback to address non-language-error issues than language-error issues. That is, in the ATF provided for essay 4 by using the CM method, 651 words (56% of the total of words) were devoted to non-language errors, as opposed to 517 (44% of the total of words) devoted to language errors. In the WF provided for essay 5 by using the WFO method, 137 words (65% of the total of words) were devoted to the former, as opposed to 73 (35% of the total of words) devoted to the latter. These figures show that the teacher was able to avoid focusing on micro-level issues and respond to macro-level ones. This is in line with the advice of many experts in the area of writing instruction (Sommers, 1980).

3. An analysis of the ATF and WF provided by the CM method as well as the WF provided by the WFO method showed that ATF covered much fewer writing problems than WF. Since the former produced a much larger quantity of feedback, it can be

concluded that ATF allowed writing problems to be treated much more thoroughly.

The above point can be further illuminated when the various types of writing problems are considered separately, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3:Average Lengths of Various Types of ATF and WF Responses

	Essay 4 (ATF)	Essay 5 (WF)
Average lengths of NLE responses (in no. of words)		
Content	81.5	24.8
Structure+organization	214.0	NA
Coherence+logic	93.0	1.0
Clarity	53.0	3.3
Style+tone	22.0	0.0
Average lengths of LE responses (in no. of words)	51.7	1.6
Total of words produced as feedback	1168.0	210.0
Total of writing problems addressed	18.0	57.0
Average no. of words per response	64.9	3.7

Note. NLE=non-language-error. LE=language-error. NA=no feedback.

was made regarding the organization and structure of essay 5.

As Table 3 shows, since the teacher did not make any comment about the organization or structure of essay 5, no comparison could be made between ATF and WF regarding this aspect. However, there was clearly a dramatic difference in the quantity of feedback the teacher produced about problems concerning other aspects of the writing: content, coherence and logic, clarity, style and tone, and language between essays 4 and 5. The teacher was more thorough in her treatment of writing problems in ATF than in WF.

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4. There were obvious differences between the way the teacher used ATF and WF in responding. As shown in Table 2, in essay 4, a high majority (89%) of the writing problems addressed through WF dealt with errors in linguistic forms while only 56% of those ones addressed through ATF dealt with them. Similarly, in essay 5, as many as 81% of the writing problems addressed concerned language errors. This showed that the teacher had a strong tendency to address micro-level issues when she responded on paper. An examination of the way these language errors were dealt with showed that the teacher mainly corrected these errors without explaining the nature of the errors. Apparently, such a way of responding saved time and was therefore chosen as the main responding strategy. Effective treatment of non-language-error problems usually require explanation of the nature of the problems and was therefore difficult to do when the means of responding was to write out the explanations laboriously by hand. It was not surprising that the teacher was tempted to avoid these problems. In contrast, the teacher tended to respond to problems which were more macro-level, i.e., problems concerning content, structure and organization, coherence and logic, clarity, and tone and style, when she responded on tape. This is understandable because these problems required explanations, often extended ones, and therefore it was easier to respond to them by using ATF, which lent itself very well to extended commenting. Writing down comments by hand has limitations: it is very time-consuming and the quantity of feedback is limited by the space available between the lines or in the margins.

In addition, a qualitative analysis of the nature of the responses

provided through ATF on essay 4 and WF on essay 5 was made in order to illuminate the differences in the quality of these two types of feedback. The analysis suggested the following:

1. **ATF allowed a higher level of thoroughness in the discussion of writing problems than WF.**

Since most people can talk much faster than they can write, it is understandable that the teacher in this study was able to treat writing problems in a more thorough manner when using ATF than when using WF. In the following, the teacher's responses to content and linguistic correctness are discussed to show this difference.

The teacher made two comments on the content of Mary's essay 4, which was about what good parents should be like. The longer of these two comments was about the problem with the conclusion of the essay, i.e., Mary's failure to refer back to all the main ideas mentioned in the body. This comment contained 114 words and appeared to have pointed out the problem clearly, as shown below:

> And then in your fourth, your fourth line, you said- fourth, fifth, and sixth line, you talked about the importance of listening to children. But then you did not refer back to the other two definitions that you gave- which are in paragraph 2, the two negations. You did not refer back to them. Usually in the conclusion, we try to refer back to the main ideas we mention in the body of the paper. But here you referred back to only part of the- one of the ideas, but not to all the ideas you mentioned in the body. Therefore, you need to- maybe work on your conclusion a little bit more. OK.

In contrast, the following is the longest comment the teacher provided on the content of Mary's essay 5, which was about what caused Mary to like coffee shops. In one of the paragraphs, Mary

stated that she liked coffee shops because she could gossip freely with her friends in those places. The teacher believed that Mary should explain why coffee shops were perfect places for gossiping since in reality people could also go to places like tea shops to gossip. In fact, the first writing topic Mary chose to talk about during the prewriting discussion had exactly the same problem. Therefore, the teacher realized that Mary was having a problem with logical reasoning and that to enlighten her on such a logical problem would take quite a bit of explanation. However, the teacher still wrote only 57 words to inform Mary of her problem, perhaps because writing down feedback was very time-consuming and therefore hard to do. The following is the teacher's comment.

> Is this important in your discussion of why a coffee shop provides a good place for gossiping? Why can't you gossip in a tea house? What is special about a coffee shop as a place for gossiping? This paper has the same problem as the one you considered doing when we had our prewriting discussion in class!

When dealing wiith language errors, the teacher was clearly more thorough when using ATF. The following is a typical example which contained 55 words (average length of responses=51.7 words). In this comment, the teacher told Mary that the way the word "let" was used was problematic. (Mary's original sentence: "Therefore, in addition to all of the above, I think two examples of negation of "goód parents" and two characters of "good parents" can **let** people understand what "good parents" are.)

And "let people understand what good parents are." We don't say- OK-「讓人們了解」, in Chinese we say「讓」. In English, if you say "let," it means 「許可」. "Can let people understand" 「可以許可人們了解」. But that's not what you mean, right? "Can help people understand." OK.

The following are six typical examples of how the teacher dealt with language errors in WF. Her comments usually contained only one or two words (average length of responses=1.6 words).

Some say it costs you so much money to go there. Some say Mcdonald's is better. Somesay the servers there wear too ~~much~~. Some
many clothes
like the ~~small~~ there. Some like the decorating there.
"smell"? *decoration*
What is ~~there~~? Coffee shop~~s~~, cafe~~s~~.
this place *A* *a*

Apparently, in general, ATF allowed writing issues to be discussed more thoroughly and therefore should be considered as a better responding method than WF. This finding is very similar to the results of studies conducted by Logan et al. (1976), Carson and McTasney (1978), Clark (1981), Yarbro and Angevine (1982), Cryer and Kaikumba (1987), Sommers (1989), Kirschner, van den Brink, and Meester (1991), Pearce and Ackley (1995), and Berner et al. (1996).

2. **ATF encouraged the incorporation of L1 in the explanation of writing problems while WF didn't.**

It was the researcher's habit to use as much English as possible when responding to students' writing. However, ATF appeared to encourage her to incorporate L1 in the explanation of writing

problems, particularly those which concerned logic and word meaning. The use of L1 should not always be looked upon as a negative element in foreign language teaching. In fact, careful use of it can be very effective in teaching a foreign language, particularly when the student's problem was the result of L1 interference. In addition, since most of the ATF provided was in English, Mary still had a very good chance of learning English from the L2 the teacher used. In fact, in the researcher's interview with Mary, the latter indicated that the use of Chinese had helped her understand her writing problems.

The following is an example of the teacher's explanation of the meaning of the phrase "for the sake of," which Mary took to mean "because of." Mary's sentence was "For the sake of my friend's words, I asked myself 'what is the definition of a good parents,' and tried to get the answer." The teacher tried to help Mary understand her problem first by translating the problematic English phrase into Chinese (see *) and then by using Chinese in explaining the misunderstanding (see **).

"For the sake of my friends' words." 「為了我的朋友的話- 的緣故。*」 "For the sake of" 是說為了-為了某某人，可是在這裡你是說因為聽了朋友的話，並不是說你要為朋友做甚麼事**. So, don't use this phrase "for the sake of," because you are not doing anything for your friends. You are just saying "After I listened to them," you know, "I started to think about what a good parent is."

The use of Chinese occurred nine times in the ATF provided for essay 4, but never even once in the WF provided for essay 5. This might have been because it takes much more time to write in Chinese than in English.

3. **The teacher demonstrated different responding strategies in her ATF and WF.**

In the following, two aspects of the teacher's responding performance are discussed: (a) the strategies she used to illuminate the nature of writing problems, and (b) her tendency to provide suggestions for revision. The discussion is conducted along two dimensions: writing problems concerning language errors and writing problems concerning other aspects of the writing.

a. Strategies used to illuminate the nature of writing problems

It was found that when dealing with writing problems, the teacher tended to use four ways to inform Mary of the problems: (1) by asking questions about the nature of the problems, (2) by making statements about the nature of the problems, (3) by using a combination of both, and (4) by providing suggestions for revision. The numbers of instances in which various strategies were used are shown in Table 4:

Table 4: Strategies Used to Illuminate the Nature of Writing Problems

	ATF (Essay 4)		WF (Essay 5)	
	LE	NLE	LE	NLE
Question	0(0%)	1(13%)	0(0%)	7(64%)
Statement	6(60%)	5(63%)	1(2%)	0(0%)
Question+statement	3(30%)	2(25%)	0(0%)	1(9%)
Suggestion for revision	1(10%)	0(0%)	45(98%)	3(27%)
Total	10(100%)	8(101%)	46(100%)	11(100%)

Note. LE=language errors. NLE=non-language errors.

Table 4 shows that when ATF was used to address problems in language errors, the strategy used most frequently by the teacher was to make statements. She did so in 6 of the 10 instances (60%). The

second most frequently used strategy was to use a combination: both statements and questions. She did so in 3 of the 10 instances (30%). The teacher's tendency to discuss language errors by using statements or questions was probably due to the ease of commenting on tape. In only one of the instances (10%) did she provide a correction for a language error without discussing the problem. The following is an example of the teacher's use of statements.

> And then 13. The word "suggest" is usually followed by a clause. For example, we say "I suggest that you go home." We do not say "I suggest you to go home." This- "I suggest-" It's a direct translation from Chinese.

On the other hand, when WF was used, the teacher had a very strong tendency to just correct the language errors without discussing the problems. She used this strategy in 45 of the 46 instances (98%). She used statements in only one instance. The teacher's avoidance of discussing problems was probably because she did not want to write a lot of words to explain language problems and language rules.

Table 4 also shows that when the teacher used ATF to address non-language-error problems, the strategy adopted most frequently was also to make statements. She did so in 5 of the 8 instances (63%). The second most frequently used strategy was a combination of statements and questions, as shown in 2 of the 8 instances (25%). She rarely used questions or just provided solutions without talking about the problems. A look into the nature of the statements and questions showed that the former tended to be more extended and the latter more concise. This showed that the teacher was willing to discuss writing problems in detail, mostly by making statements, and that she avoided providing suggestions for Mary so that Mary would have the

opportunity to learn how to revise by herself. The following is an example of the teacher's use of statements.

> The next paragraph- on page 3, the first long paragraph. You talked about what happened later. Apparently, this is part of the paragraph that talked about- talked about what happened between Joe- It is a very long one. I guess since your discussion about Joe is very very long. I guess it's OK to separate it into two paragraphs. However, I see another problem here. That is, in your paragraph 2, you talked about two- you used two negations to define "good parents." And it seems that you talked about two things in one paragraph, and neither of the two things has been dealt with adequately. That means you did not say very much about either one. And that seems a bit strange. And then you spent- you devoted so much space to the third definition, "good parents are those ones who listen to their children patiently." Now this definition, you devoted two long paragraphs to it. Well, I wonder if you feel this is a bit unbalanced....

On the other hand, when WF was used to deal with non-language errors, the teacher had the tendency to use questions to alert Mary to writing problems. The teacher used this strategy in 7 of 11 instances, probably because her questions were usually more concise than statements and did not require the writing of many words. An analysis of the questions did show that most of her questions only identified the nature of the problems briefly and few of them attempted to mirror back to the student the effects of the writing on the reader. The second most frequent strategy was to just provide suggestions without mentioning the nature of the writing problems, as shown in 3 of the 11 instances. She used a combination of statements and questions only once. This shows that the teacher had a stronger tendency to

minimize the effort required for commenting when using WF than when using ATF. This was very natural because it took much time to discuss writing problems on paper. Therefore, the teacher opted to make suggestions, most of which were very short. The following is an example of her use of questions to indicate a problem. In this case, she tried to tell Mary that she should have discussed the second reason for liking coffee houses in her third paragraph, which Mary did not do.

> What is the main idea of this paragraph? Where is your topic sentence? Aren't you supposed to talk about the second cause?

b. Tendency to provide suggestions for solving writing problems

Table 5 shows the teacher's tendency to provide advice for revision in ATF and WF:

Table 5: Tendency to Provide Suggestions for Revision

	ATF (Essay 4)		WF (Essay 5)	
	LE	NLE	LE	NLE
Problem identification	1(10%)	4(50%)	1(2%)	7(64%)
Problem identification+ suggestion for revision	8(80%)	4(50%)	0(0%)	1(9%)
Suggestion for revision	1(10%)	0(0%)	45(98%)	3(27%)
Total	10(100%)	8(100%)	46(100%)	11(100%)

Note. LE=language errors. NLE=non-language errors.

Table 5 shows that when the teacher addressed language errors by using ATF, she tended to not only provided suggestions for revision but also discuss the writing problems. She did so in 8 out of

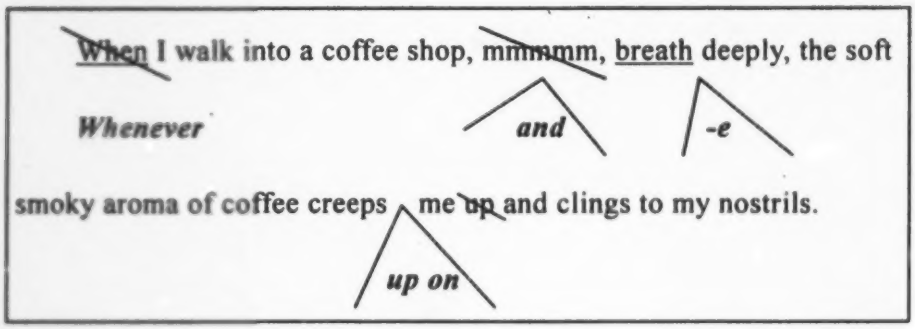
a total of 10 instances (80%). Most of the discussion of writing problems tended to be of the nature of explicating grammar rules or analyzing the difference in meaning between an English word and a Chinese word which is often mistakenly considered to be an equivalent. The teacher rarely just identified the problem or just gave a suggestion without talking about the problem. This shows that the teacher was very interested in having Mary understand the nature of her language errors.

The following is an example of how the teacher explained the problem with the use of "so that" in the following sentence: "In my neighborhood, a boy, named Joe didn't like to take a bath in a period of time so that people passed by him could smell his bad odorant and felt sick." Mary apparently mistook "so that" to mean "therefore." The teacher explained what "so that" meant by translating it into Chinese (see *) and also by giving an example of how to use this phrase correctly (see **). In addition, the teacher provided the correct way of saying what Mary wanted to say (see ***).

"So that people pass him."「以便*」. For example- I'll give you a sentence as an example. "He brought lunch to his office, so that he could eat in his office and not- without having to go out.**" "So that" is「以便」. But here you mean「因此」. So you could say "So when people passed him, they could smell his bad odor.***"

On the other hand, what is shown above never occurred in the 46 instances in which errors in linguistic form were addressed by using WF. Instead, the teacher corrected the language problems without shedding light on the nature of these problems. This suggests that she almost always adopted the least-effort approach by adding, crossing out, or substituting words, phrases, or punctuation marks, which was very easy to do. This is again understandable, because it is very

time-consuming to write out explanations for writing problems. The following are four examples of how the teacher responded to language errors:


When I walk into a coffee shop, mmmmm, breath deeply, the soft
Whenever
and
-e
smoky aroma of coffee creeps me up and clings to my nostrils.
up on

Students often make language errors because they lack understanding of certain language rules. Thus, explanation of the nature of errors and relevant language rules would greatly benefit students. Even though the teacher would enable the students to know the correct forms to be used by providing answers for the students, there is a chance that the students might just accept what the teacher provides without understanding why their errors are errors, or they might copy the corrections into the next draft mindlessly, just to get their task done. Therefore, ATF, which encouraged the teacher to provide explanations for errors, seemed to be a superior way of responding to language problems.

On the other hand, when addressing non-language-error issues by using ATF, in half of the instances (4 out of 8), the teacher identified the problems without providing suggestions, and in the other half she both identified the problems and provided suggestions. In 3 out of the 4 instances in which suggestions were made, the teacher pointed Mary toward a general direction for revising, rather than giving her the exact solutions for the problems. In only one

instance did she give the exact solution. This suggested that ATF appeared to encourage the teacher to put the burden of finding solutions on the student. This might be a good approach since it requires the student to take an active role in her learning. The following is an example in which the teacher pointed Mary toward a direction for revising without giving the actual solution.

> Altogether, I felt that you- you- In your conclusion, you mentioned all those definitions made by other people. Is it necessary to mention other people's opinions? I mean don't you want to devote more to your own definition? Devote more space, I mean. OK.

In contrast, when WF was used, the teacher tended to just identify writing problems without providing solutions, as she did in 7 out of the total of 11 instances (64%). The second most often used strategy was to just give suggestions for revision. In only one instance did she both identify a problem and make a suggestion. The teacher's failure to do both may suggest that it took very much effort to do so on paper. An examination of the nature of the four suggestions for revision made by the teacher showed that in 3 out of these 4 instances, the teacher had the tendency to provide the actual text Mary could use in her revision, rather than suggest a general direction for Mary to follow and encourage her to find the actual solution for herself. In all the three cases, the solutions consisted of just a few words. In only one instance did the teacher provide a rough direction and expect Mary to do the actual problem solving on her own. The reason why the teacher provided actual solutions for the three problems may be that it would take much less time to write just a few words to provide the solutions than to write out lengthy suggestions that were supposed to facilitate Mary's exploration of solutions on her own. Therefore, it seemed that the teacher had chosen an approach that was time-saving.

Solving problems for the student may not be in the best interest of the student because it would deprive the learner of opportunities to learn. The following is an example in which the teacher solved a writing problem for Mary. In the sentence presented below, Mary wanted to say that some people felt that the waitresses at McDonald's wore too many clothes and therefore did not look sexy. The teacher thought that the meaning of "wear too much" was very unclear and made the change shown below for Mary:

Some say the servers there wear ~~too much~~.
many clothes

When the teacher used WF to address non-language issues, she either did not attempt to give the student a hint on the direction for revising or she just gave the actual solutions themselves. That is, WF appeared to encourage the teacher to solve Mary's problems for her to a greater extent than ATF, and thus WF seemed to be a less ideal way of responding to writing.

4. ATF encouraged personal interaction between the teacher and the student more than WF.

ATF seemed to encourage personal interaction between the teacher and the student more than WF. In the beginning of each taping session, the teacher always greeted the student by calling his/her name and then invited the student to go over the comments with her. The following is what the teacher said to Mary in the beginning of the tape for essay 4:

Hi, Mary. I read your definition paper. Its- It's a- It seems O.K. It just- I still have some suggestions about the structure of the paper, and also the content. OK, let's go over them one by one.

However, this personal interaction never took place in WF, suggesting that WF tended to be less personal, and therefore less inviting. The researcher believes that students' motivation for learning can be enhanced by a good relationship with the teacher. Therefore, ATF may be able to facilitate students' learning more than WF.

5. **ATF contained a higher level of repetitiousness than WF.**

ATF contained a higher level of repetitiousness than WF. As is often true with oral discourse, speakers may repeat themselves in order to help interlocutors understand what is being said. On the other hand, in written discourse, a writer tends to be more concise, since the intended reader always has the option of going back to the section of the text that causes difficulty in understanding. The ATF provided by the teacher in this study also shared the above-mentioned characteristic of a regular oral discourse. The following excerpt from the ATF provided for essay 4 shows two kinds of repetition: (1) repetition done by translating English into Chinese (see *), and (2) repetition done by offering a close paraphrase (see **). Such repetitions may not be looked at in a negative light, since they might enhance Mary's understanding of what the teacher said, even though they might take up some space on the tape.

> No. 1. You said "I can't bear them any more." "Finally he yielded." OK. "Yielded" means「讓步。」"I can not bear them any more."「我再也不能忍受他們。*」 If you say "I cannot bear them any more," that means you are going to fight against them, you know. Then you are not going to yield. So, there is something wrong with the logic here. I mean if he is not going to bear- put up with his parents any more, then he is not going to yield**.

On the other hand, such repetitiousness rarely occurred in the

WF provided for essay 5. This might again be due to the need to save time when a time-consuming responding method was used. This is also consistent with the nature of written discourse, which is often concise because it is usually preplanned. The following is the teacher's concise response to Mary's brief mention of a coffee shop as an ideal place for looking at many kinds of interesting people. Here the teacher tried to get Mary to go into detail to explain the characteristics that made a coffee shop a perfect place for admiring people:

Why? This is an important idea, but you did not discuss it. What is special about a coffee shop as a place for looking at people?

Even though AFT was more repetitious than WF, the former still contained more ideas than the latter. This was so because the teacher produced 6.1 times more feedback when using ATF, but she never went as far as repeating any idea six times in her ATF, or phrase her comments in such a wordy way that she took six times more words to say an idea that she would have said in a briefer way when using WF. This assumption is supported by a careful examination of the ATF and WF feedback she produced.

In order to find out whether Mary had responded differently to ATF and WF, the researcher interviewed her about how she had used the responses made for essays 4 and 5. Mary reported that for essay 4 she used all but one of the 18 ATF responses made. The one that she did not use concerned the clarity of the meaning of a clause. She decided not to use the response not because she did not understand what the researcher suggested, but because she disagreed with the researcher. On the other hand, in essay 5, she used 47 out of the 57 WF responses made. The 10 that she did not use included three that

she did not agree with (one concerning content and two concerning language correctness), one that she agreed with but did not know how to carry out the suggested revision for, and six that became unnecessary because of the other revisions already made. The researcher asked Mary why she disagreed with three of the responses. Mary's explanations showed that she had failed to understand the nature of the problems involved and the revisions the researcher had intended. An analysis of these three responses showed that these responses were indeed not clear enough to allow Mary to understand the nature of the writing problems. Therefore, it can be concluded that ATF allowed Mary to understand the researcher' comments better and also to use them more. On the other hand, Mary appeared to understand WF comments less and also used them less. This probably occurred because the researcher was not able to explain her comments fully on paper. This is not surprising since it is very time-consuming to write out explanations, and often the space to write in is very limited.

In addition, in the questionnaire Mary was asked to fill out at the end of the course, she showed her preference for ATF over WF. On a five-point scale (5 points=strongly agree, agree, not sure or no opinion, disagree, and strongly disagree), she indicated the degree to which she agreed with three statements: (1) I think ATF is superior to WF in terms of the quality of the content of feedback, (2) I think ATF is superior to WF in terms of the clarity of feedback, and (3) I think ATF is superior to WF in terms of the thoroughness of feedback. Mary **agreed** with the first and third statements and **strongly agreed** with the second. In addition, when she was asked about her feelings about ATF and WF, Mary said that she felt ATF was more lively and also made her feel as if she was having a live conference with the teacher (which she enjoyed). Overall, she prefeered ATF.

Conclusions and Implications

Since this study was based on feedback produced by one teacher for one student, the conclusions drawn from this study may not be easily generalized to a larger EFL population. However, findings from this study should help EFL researchers and teachers understand the effectiveness of ATF to a certain extent and also identify areas worthy of further investigation.

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from this study:

1. The CM method seemed to be much more efficient than the WFO method. The former was able to produce 6.1 times more feedback. In addition, when ATF is singled out and compared with WF, the former was also more effective in terms of the quantity of feedback. It required 12.5 times more time to record WF on paper than to record ATF on tape after the essay had been read once. Even though ATF required more preparation time, it was still more efficient than WF when preparation time and responding time were considered together.
2. The CM method allowed the teacher to address 1.2 times more writing problems than the WFO method. The former also allowed the teacher to discuss problems in greater detail.
3. As far as the aspects of the writing addressed were concerned, there did not seem to be much difference between the CM and the WFO methods. In both modes of feedback, the majority of the writing problems discussed concerned language errors. However, in terms of the quantity of feedback (i.e., number of words produced), the teacher still devoted more feedback to discussing non-language-error issues than language-error ones,

suggesting the teacher's intention to avoid focusing too much on micro-level elements.

4. When the CM method was adopted, the teacher seemed to use ATF and WF for different purposes. That is, she tended to save WF mostly for dealing with language errors and ATF for both language errors and other problems concerning content, structure and organization, coherence and logic, clarity, and tone and style.
5. When using ATF, the teacher discussed writing problems, both those concerning language errors and those unrelated to language errors, more thoroughly than WF.
6. In dealing with language errors, the teacher's strategies for illuminating writing problems when using ATF was to use statements or questions to help the student understand the nature of the problems. On the other hand, when using WF, the teacher tended to just correct the problems without helping the student understand the problems. In dealing with problems other than language errors, when using ATF, the teacher tended to use statements to discuss problems in great detail and expect the student to solve her own problems, since the teacher never provided any suggestions for revision. In contrast, when using WF, she tended to use questions to briefly point out writing problems, and sometimes she also just provided suggestions for revision without discussing the problems, perhaps because it was time-consuming to write out explanations of problems. Therefore, ATF seemed to encourage the student to solve her problems better than WF. The way the teacher responded through WF reflected her intention to minimize the time spent on responding.

7. Regarding the teacher's tendency to offer suggestions for revision, when addressing language errors by using ATF, the teacher seemed to be very interested in both explaining the nature of writing problems and providing solutions. This thorough approach should be very helpful in helping the student acquire language. In contrast, when using WF, the teacher had a very strong tendency to correct language errors for the student without explaining the nature of the errors. Such an approach might have the drawback of taking away the student's chance of solving the problems for herself.

   When using ATF to deal with non-language-error issues, in half of the instances the teacher just pointed out problems, and in the other half she tended to both identify problems and point the student toward a direction for solving the problems without giving the actual solutions themselves. When using WF, the teacher tended to either just point out problems or provide the actual solutions for the student without discussing the problems. Again, it appears that ATF allowed the student to take over her own learning better than WF.
8. ATF encouraged the incorporation of Chinese in the explanation of writing problems while WF didn't. Such use of L1 helped the student understand writing problems.
9. ATF encouraged personal interaction between the teacher and the student more than WF. Therefore, the former mode of response may be more inviting to the student.
10. ATF contained a higher level of repetitiousness than WF. Such repetitiousness is very natural in regular oral discourse and does not have to be considered as a drawback of ATF.

Implications

A few implications for teaching can be drawn from this study. This study showed that, in terms of the quantity of feedback, the CM method was superior to the traditional WFO method as a way to respond to EFL student writing. ATF was also more effective than WF in terms of the quantity and quality of feedback. Therefore, EFL teachers are encouraged to use this method. However, the teacher needs to be careful about his/her tendency to use L1 when providing ATF. Since it is very easy for a teacher whose first language is Chinese to lapse into Chinese, he/she should make sure that the use of L1 is absolutely necessary. L1 may be used effectively to explain writing problems related to logic as well as confusion about word meaning which results from L1 interference. If a writing problem can be explained effectively without using L1, then L1 should be avoided.

This study has its limitations. Since only the feedback provided for one EFL student on two writing assignments was examined, the generalizability of the findings was compromised to a certain extent. In addition, this study might also have been weakened by the fact that only one teacher was studied. The characteristics that ATF and WF had exhibited in this study might have reflected only the responding patterns of one individual teacher, and therefore might not have been representative of what most teachers would do when making ATF and WF responses. The fact that the teacher in this study still preferred to deal with language errors that can easily be corrected on paper by using WF when she was supposed to use ATF as the main responding mode shows that each teacher has her own preference for dealing with students' writing problems and another teacher may use ATF and WF in a very different way. In the future, more teachers and students can be involved. Since the types of writing assignments may also play a

role in the nature of a teacher's feedback, future researchers could include a larger variety of writing assignments (e.g., argumentation, comparison and contrast, process). In addition, in order to provide a clearer picture of the effectiveness of audiotaped teacher feedback, the revisions made by EFL students in response to such feedback should be examined to see if students are able to revise successfully with the help of this feedback. Researchers may also examine what types of feedback lead to effective revisions more often than others. Findings from studies on these issues should be valuable to EFL composition researchers and teachers.

Acknowledgment:

This study was funded by the National Science Council of Taiwan (project number: NSC 88-2411-H-029-008).

（本文實際出版年：八十九年一月）

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教師用錄音帶及紙筆書寫方式給予學生英文作文回饋的教學法的個案研究

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摘 要

在台灣，已經有英文作文教師採取用錄音帶的方式給予學生回饋，來幫助他們修正文章。然而，幾乎沒有人研究過這種方法對中國學生的效果。因此這個研究要藉著比較用錄音帶回饋及用傳統的紙筆回饋的不同，來探討前者的效果。探討的課題如下: (一) 老師用錄音帶及紙筆兩種合併使用的方式，與只用紙筆的方式，在回饋的量上，孰者為優?另外，如果單用錄音帶回饋，與單用紙筆回饋比較，在回饋的量上，又孰者為優? (二) 用錄音帶及紙筆合併使用的方式，與只用紙筆的方式，這兩種所產生的回饋，在本質上有何不同?另外，單用錄音帶與單用紙筆，這兩種方式的回饋，在本質上有何不同?本研究的對象是研究者自己及她在東海大學所教的大二作文班的一位學生。研究資料為研究者對該學生的第四及第五篇文章所給的回饋。第四篇文章，是用錄音帶與紙筆合併方式回饋，而第五篇是單用紙筆，研究者對每篇文章所費的回饋時間都記錄下來。

研究發現如下: (一)不管是用錄音帶及紙筆兩種合併的方式回饋，與只用紙筆的方式回饋比較，或單用錄音帶回饋，與單用紙

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筆回饋比較，在回饋的量上，前者皆比後者為優。(二)當用錄音帶及紙筆兩種合併的方式回饋，與只用紙筆的方式回饋比較時，老師回饋時所看的文章的層面沒有太大的不同。(三)當老師使用紙筆回饋時，比較傾向於處理語言錯誤的問題，而當使用錄音帶回饋時，則比較傾向於處理各類的問題。(四)當老師使用錄音帶回饋時，討論問題比使用紙筆回饋時要詳盡。(五)當老師使用錄音帶回饋時，所使用的技巧，與使用紙筆回饋時的不同。同時前者比後者更能鼓勵學生自己去思考如何修改文章。本研究結果顯示在回饋時使用錄音帶效果較佳。

關鍵詞：作文教學、第二語作文教學、教師回饋、文章修改